

## Message Text

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51

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-15 ISO-00 AF-10 OC-06 CCO-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 OPR-02

SY-10 A-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USSS-00 DRC-01 /173 W

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P R 111630Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1260

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 11003

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, IT

SUBJECT: ITALIAN REPORT ON SITUATION IN DAMASCUS

DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO

REF: ROME 10931; BEIRUT 11978, 12004

1. ON EVENING OCTOBER 10 RESPONSIBLE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL CONVEYED TO US SUBSTANCE OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION HE HAD JUST HAD WITH ITALIAN EMBASSY DAMASCUS. ACCORDING SOURCE, ITALIAN EMBASSY CONFIRMED THAT SOVIET CULTURAL REPEAT CULTURAL CENTER HAD BEEN DESTROYED IN ISRAELI AIR RAID AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN CASUALTIES; HOWEVER, NUMBER AND NATIONALITY OF THESE CASUALTIES WERE NOT REPEAT NOT KNOWN. ACCORDING SOURCE, ITALIAN EMBASSY PROMISED MORE DETAILED SITREP BY CABLE, BUT CAUTIONED THAT TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION WAS DIFFICULT ALTHOUGH TELEPHONE SERVICE REMAINED SATISFACTORY. ITALIAN EMBASSY RECOMMENDED THAT  
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MINISTRY AND EMBASSY MAKE MORE USE OF TELEPHONE IN VIEW OF CABLE

TRAFFIC PROBLEMS.

2. ON OCTOBER 11 WE QUERIED RESPONSIBLE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL ABOUT STATEMENT ISSUED BY FOREIGN MINISTRY TO EFFECT THAT ITALIANS HAD EVACUATED A GROUP OF NATIONALS FROM SYRIA. STATEMENT ALSO REPORTED THAT ITALIAN EMBASSY CAIRO WAS ENDEAVORING TO REPATRIATE A GROUP OF ABOUT NINETY ITALIAN TOURISTS FROM EGYPT.

3. OFFICIAL CONFIRMED THAT ITALIAN EMBOFF CARDILLI HAD ESCORTED GROUP OF ABOUT 40 ITALIAN NATIONALS WHO HAD BEEN TRANSPORTED BY BUS FROM DAMASCUS TO BEIRUT ON OCTOBER 9; MOST OF GROUP WERE NON-RESIDENTS WHO HAD TAKEN REFUGE IN EMBASSY. IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC QUESTION, OFFICIAL SAID THAT ITALIAN GOVERNMENT HAD NOT REPEAT NOT ORDERED ANY EVACUATION OF OFFICIALS AND/OR THEIR DEPENDENTS FROM DAMASCUS. HE SAID ITALIAN EMBASSY HAD OFFERED TO ASSIST ITALIANS WHO WISHED TO LEAVE DAMASCUS, AND GROUP OF 40 WERE SUCH VOLUNTARY EVACUEES.

4. AFTER ABOVE DRAFTED, OFFICIAL PHONED TO PASS SUBSTANCE OF CABLE JUST RECIVED FROM DAMASCUS. MESSAGE EXPRESSED APPREHENSION THAT SITUATION IN CITY WORSENING AND ASKED FOR FUNDS FOR "PASSIVE DEFENSE" MEASURES AND OTHER PRECAUTIONS FOR PROTECTION OF PREMISES AND ITALIAN COMMUNITY. IN RESPONSE TO QUERY, OFFICIAL SAID MESSAGE DID NOT REPEAT NOT CONVEY ANY IMPLICATION THAT EMBASSY FEARED MOB ACTION OR ANY OTHER LOCAL UNREST, BUT RATHER WAS APPREHENSIVE RE FURTHER MILITARY ACTION AGAINST CITY. CABLE REPORTED THAT ITALIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION IN NORTH SYRIA HAD LEFT FOR TURKEY, BUT THAT ITALIAN TECHNICIANS AT EUPHRATES DAM WERE REMAINING ON THE JOB; ALSO THAT SECOND GROUP OF UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF ITALIAN NATIONALS TRAVELING IN PRIVATE CARS HAD DEPARTED DAMASCUS FOR BEIRUT. VOLPE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED USINT CAIRO.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**Executive Order:** GS VOLPE  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, XF, IT, SY  
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